

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your colleague Susan Eisenhower quotes in her book "Breaking Free" the Russian physicist Roald Sagdeev, who testified before you last November:

"Without an open discussion of failures and past mistakes, it's impossible to make improvements and avoid such things in the future."

Applied to your task this means:

The vast expense of time and money for a "pilot plant" can be somewhat justified only if we learn not just from success but also:

what to do differently,
what to avoid like hell,
and not to waste effort on trivialities.

For that we must acknowledge some facts not yet in evidence before this commission (refer to handout):

If you pass onto page 2, one item that has not been mentioned yet so far is that nuclear reactors are natural features. The first-known fission reactors are 2 billion years old, and the waste from them has not harmed the environment whatsoever. The next page (3) shows Project Gnome, the underground nuclear shot that actually created the first underground repository for radioactive waste in Eddy County. So WIPP is not the first. Let's talk about facts, not regulatory fictions and semantics. Gnome (page 4) entailed higher risks than WIPP but caused no harm; therefore it's a positive, beyond-worst-case analogue for geologic isolation in salt, even of heat-generating waste, because that detonation caused a lot of heat. On the next page (5), you see some information on a German repository, the first one for chemically-hazardous waste, and of course that has infinite half-life; so that waste is much more dangerous. If it works in salt that's less thick, with less overburden, with more groundwater on top, then WIPP is an absolute no-brainer, and actually disposal of less dangerous stuff in the same salt is a no-brainer. We can pass over the next page (6). The next page (7) mentions neighboring potash mines, neighboring to WIPP, and what the point of that is: do not necessarily consider only new excavations for additional repositories. All existing repositories in salt with the sole exception of WIPP are in former or still operating mines. The next slide (8) shows some basalts. That is magma that intruded actually the salt here and in Germany; it didn't affect the salt for more than a few inches. A very beautiful, natural analogue for heat-generating waste. And then the last slide (9): I won't read it to you because you can read it for yourself.

To sum up, insistence on strict compliance with regulations without continuously questioning and justifying their factual, rational basis is the last refuge of the

incompetent and malevolent. We have heard from both categories today. Don't ignore facts. Ignore the purveyors of ignorance and disinformation, Mr. Chairman.

Oral statement delivered at- the open meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, Carlsbad, NM, Thursday, January 27, 2011, by Norbert T. Rempe, 1403 N. Country Club Circle, Carlsbad, NM 88220, rempent@yahoo.com

"I first visited a German geologic repository for waste containing dangerous materials with infinite half-lives in 1973. It continues to operate safely. I have worked on deep geologic waste isolation for two decades and contributed to the professional literature, for example a review article in the Journal "Progress in Nuclear Energy" about former and still operating repositories. I also edited the book "Deep Geologic Repositories", published by the Geological Society of America."